

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 00512 270714Z

13

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 OC-05 CCO-00

CIAE-00 OTPE-00 EB-07 FCC-01 NSAE-00 RSC-01 COME-00

BIB-01 OES-03 ACDA-05 DODE-00 PM-03 L-02 NASA-01

NSC-05 USIA-06 /079 W

----- 046988

R 251000Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8051

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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EO 11652: N/AJ

TAGS: PINR, ETEL, TSPA, TS

SUBJ: FOREIGN SMALL EARTH STATION TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

REF: STATE 282811, DEC 27, 1974

1. DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS OF TUNISIAN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS STATED THAT TUNISIA HAS NO RPT NO PROGRAMS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS WITHIN NEXT TEN YEARS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE SMALL EARTH STATIONS AS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL OTHER THAN THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH ARAB TELECOMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE PROJECT (TUNIS 7645 AND PREVIOUS). HE NOTED THAT TUNISIA DOES PLAN TO BUILD AN INTELSAT EARTH STATION AND WILL PROBABLY BUILD TWO SMALL EARTH STATIONS AS PART OF ARAB SATELLITE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED. HE NOTED THAT ARAB TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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PAGE 02 TUNIS 00512 270714Z

UNION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE IS PROCEEDING WITH STUDY OF

ESTABLISHMENT OF "ARAB INTELSAT" AND OF PARAMETERS AND FEASIBILITY OF ARAB SATELLITE SYSTEM. COMMITTEE, HE SAID, STILL TO COMPLETE REPORT BY MAR 31 AND SUBMIT IT TO ARAB COMMUNICATIONS MINISTERS IN CAIRO. (COMMENT: WE NOTE FROM KUWAIT 312 THAT THIS MEETING MAY, IN FACT, TAKE PLACE IN KUWAIT, BUT GOT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE AWARE OF CHANGE IN VENUE.)

2. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED PARA 6 REFTEL WILL DEPEND ON FINAL DECISIONS BY ALL ARAB STATES REGARDING ARAB TELECOMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE SYSTEM. PRESUMABLY "ARAB INTELSAT" WILL BE CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY OF SELECTING POSSIBLE SUPPLIERS, NEGOTIATIONS, AND CONCLUDING ACTUAL SERVICE AND SUPPLY CONTRACTS. HARD TO TELL AT THIS TIME AND FROM TUNISIAN VANTAGE POINT WHICH FACTORS LISTED REFTEL WILL BE MOST IMPORTANT.

3. SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY INFORMATION REGARDING STATUS OF ARAB TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM OBTAINED FROM REPRESENTATIVE OF LARGE FIRM WHICH IS COMPETING ON THIS PROJECT MAY BE OF INTEREST. THIS SOURCE STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD TECHNICAL COMMITTEE HAS RUN INTO SERIOUS DELAYS AND PROBABLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMPLETE STUDY BEFORE END OF 1975. MAJOR CAUSE, HE THOUGHT, IS DESIRE BY SEVERAL ARAB STATES TO INCLUDE SPECIAL MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY IN SATELLITE AND TO EXPAND NUMBER OF CHANNELS FOR OTHER PURPOSES. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT WHILE HUGHES AND OTHER COMPANIES PROPOSING SMALL SPIN-TYPE SATELLITES STILL SEEM TO BE IN A RELATIVELY STRONG POSITION, DESIRED EXPANSION OF COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY MIGHT FAVOR SUPPLIERS OF LARGER STABILIZED SATELLITES.

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